



Graduate Composers Concert

**Monday, April 19, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.
Convocation Hall, Arts Building**



DEPARTMENT OF
MUSIC
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Graduate Student Composers Concert

April 19, 2010

Convocation Hall, University of Alberta, 7:00 p.m.

Enterprise String Quartet

Guillaume Tardif, Virginie Gagné, violin

Charles Pilon, viola

Joanne Yu, cello

Andriy Talpash, conductor

1. *Forgotten Ways of Thinking (2010)* Shumaila Hemani

Electroacoustic composition

2. *INEO (2010)* Colin Labadie

String Quartet & tape

3. *Alienation (2010)* Jacek Sobieraj

String Quartet & live electronics

4. *The Abyss of Unnamable Devourers (2010)* Daniel Brophy

String Quartet & live electronics

Forgotten Ways of Thinking

This piece is based on the recordings I collected in Bhitshah in summer of 2009. Bhitshah is a small town in the Sindh province of Pakistan, and it is known for the shrine of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai. For any ethnomusicologist, field-work is the most enriching experience of their work, but there are only some aspects of the experience that makes its way into published text. This piece is an attempt to give expression to those aspects of field-work experience that may otherwise be forgotten.

-- Shumaila Hemani (2010)

INEO

"The title of this piece, *INEO*, is Latin for "I enter," or "I go into." At the outset of writing *INEO*, I made a conscious decision to use a narrow palette of techniques drawn from a set of extremes: quiet, high, and slow. For me, working this way required a certain amount of grit and self-discipline since I was constantly fighting the urge to do more. The writing process was thus personally challenging and unnerving, despite the austere surface of the piece. At many points, I had to force myself to simply dive in and push forward. For this reason, I felt that *INEO* was an appropriate title."

-- Colin Labadie (2010)

Alienation

Alienation - music for two violins, viola, violoncello and live electronics was inspired by psychological distress of being isolated from a group and activity in which one should be involved. It was galvanized by one's estrangement and solitude.

When looking at a string quartet, it is easy to notice that one of the players holds the instrument in a different way. It is the cello player who is so distinctive in the above ensemble. In addition to that, cello can produce the whole variety of sounds, which are unachievable for other instruments of the quartet. In my composition I used this analogy to create a pseudo theatrical and musical depiction of numerous dynamics generated in a scenario when someone is atypical.

There are two main forces embedded in the structure of the work: a "group" force represented by the two violins (with violin 1 being the leader), and an "individual" force represented by the cello. The latter, being permanently late, and not always following orders and procedures en masse, finally rebels separating itself from the group formation by establishing a cadenza-like solo. In between the abovementioned two drives, there is the viola, the alto/tenor member of the string quartet. The viola, which in appearance is almost identical to the violin but slightly larger, is being influenced both: by the former, and by the latter host. Surely besides the similarity of string tuning [viola: *c – g – d' – a'* (C3 – G3 – D4 – A4) and cello: *C – G – d – a* (C2 – G2 – D3 – A3)] the viola also finds some links to cello in the historical field. There was a time when viola's ancestor was called *viola di braccio*, while cello's predecessor was called *viola da gamba*, both *violli*! And therefore in my piece viola engages itself in a little flirt with cello. Their romantic tête-à-tête unfortunately ends with violins' disturbing return and the viola is claimed back from the idyllic duet into a rushing, busy reign of exigencies. Cello follows its new ally and joins back the ensemble in a "melting pot" passage, which eventually leads to a quite surprising end.

The electronic ingredient, the obvious "fifth wheel" of my music arrangement consists of a pre-recorded stereo track as well as real-time sound effect controlling. This is simply to enhance specific musical phrases and reinforce the sound environment while the quartet is focusing on their performing merits. It is also to disassociate my work from the musical form known as string quartet.

-- Jacek Sobieraj (2010)

The Abyss of Unnamable Devourers

The Abyss of Unnamable Devourers was created during an obsession with the science-fiction/horror author H.P. Lovecraft. A common element found in Lovecraft writings is the infamous *Necrinomicon*, also known as the book of the dead. Many critics claim that the *Necrinomicon* was created by Lovecraft himself as a subject to draw inspiration from. However in recent years there have been discoveries of this book and debate whether it is an old and sacred text of a belief system long since abandoned or a fictional object created as a means for inspiration.

“Such books have existed in fact, and do exist. Idries Shah tells us of a search he conducted for a copy of the Book of Power by the Arab magician Abdul-Kadir (see: *The Secret Lore of Magic* by Shah), of which only one copy was ever found. The Keys of Solomon had a similar reputation, as did *The Magus* by Barret, until all of these works were eventually reprinted in the last fifteen years or so.”

-- Simon, Ed. *Necrinomicon*, Avon Books, March 1980.

Among these pages are sacred rights to bring forth demons from beyond a mystical gate that is protected by ‘UMR-AT-TAWIL, the guide for those who would seek the other realm. In the story *The Silver Key*, Randolph Carter—a character frequently used in H.P. Lovecraft’s novels, discovers these gates through rites discovered in the *Necrinomicon*. On this journey, beautiful and terrible discoveries are made in light of spiritual oneness and higher consciousness. In my work *The Abyss of Unnamable Devourers*, these stories are synthesized with chants and rites taken directly from the *Necrinomicon* in order to create an atmosphere of fear, wonder, beauty, sadness and chaos.

-- Daniel Brophy (2010)

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